

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 258

By Overbey

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those notable sites of profound natural beauty that distinguish Tennessee as one of the most attractive areas in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is most assuredly one such site; and

WHEREAS, in the 1920s, groups of local citizens and officials in Western North Carolina and East Tennessee displayed enormous foresight in recognizing the potential benefits of establishing a national park in the Southern Appalachians; and

WHEREAS, the boundaries and location of the proposed park were selected from among the finest examples of the most scenic and intact mountain forests in the Southeast; and

WHEREAS, the creation of Great Smoky Mountain National Park was the result of more than two decades of determined efforts, with over 1,100 families and other property owners called upon to sacrifice their farms and homes for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations; and

WHEREAS, Great Smoky Mountain National Park was created by an act of the United States Congress on June 15, 1934; and

WHEREAS, the park today provides sanctuary for the most diverse flora and fauna of any national park in the temperate U.S. and preserves an unparalleled collection of historic structures from the 19th and early 20th century; and

WHEREAS, the Smokies have been America's most popular national park since it was opened, attracting 9-10 million visitors each year, and park visitors contribute over \$700 million each year to local economies; and

WHEREAS, a host of events have been planned to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of Great Smoky Mountain National Park; and

WHEREAS, throughout the year, more than one hundred community events in Tennessee and North Carolina mark the park's anniversary and, in January alone, sixteen such events are being hosted in Knoxville, Townsend, Gatlinburg, and Pigeon Forge, and at the Fontana Dam in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, at Clingmans Dome in late April, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will host a proclamation signing event that focuses on the joint efforts of Tennessee and North Carolina to establish and maintain the park; the Governors of both Tennessee and North Carolina will present official declarations of celebration at the event; and

WHEREAS, in June, a three-day event highlights three distinct aspects which make the park unique: the charm and beauty of Cades Cove, Tennessee; the men and women who have helped to make a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park a truly singular experience; and the Appalachian and Cherokee cultural heritages which have combined over generations to give a special flavor to the park and its surrounding communities; and

WHEREAS, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be rededicated on September 2, 2009, in a ceremony at Newfound Gap on the Tennessee-North Carolina border; and

WHEREAS, the numerous anniversary celebrations would not have been possible were it not for the prodigious efforts of the Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Great Smoky Mountains Association, groups that worked tirelessly to coordinate the various efforts of neighboring towns and cities. In order to keep those communities connected with the park throughout the year of celebration, volunteer ambassadors have been designated to maintain close relations; and

WHEREAS, the individuals of Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park work assiduously to raise funds for, promote the awareness of, and provide volunteers to the park; and

WHEREAS, the Great Smoky Mountains Association, a nonprofit organization authorized by Congress, seeks to support the parks educational, scientific, and historical programs; and

WHEREAS, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Friends of the Smokies are building a four-million-dollar endowment to improve park trails, especially those in the greatest need; and

WHEREAS, half of the endowment comes from the ASLAN Foundation, a Knoxville-based organization founded by the late Lindsay Young, who was a charter board member of the Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, these celebrations and the people who have come together to make them possible truly constitute a testament to the joy and wonder experienced by so many visitors to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, the vigor and determination of these dedicated individuals bodes well for the park's future, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, with its majestic peaks, abundant wildlife, and lush verdure, will no doubt continue to inspire awe and reverence for many years to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and recognize the immense beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the occasion of its seventy-fifth anniversary and commend all of the people who have contributed to its establishment and maintenance as a national landmark.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.